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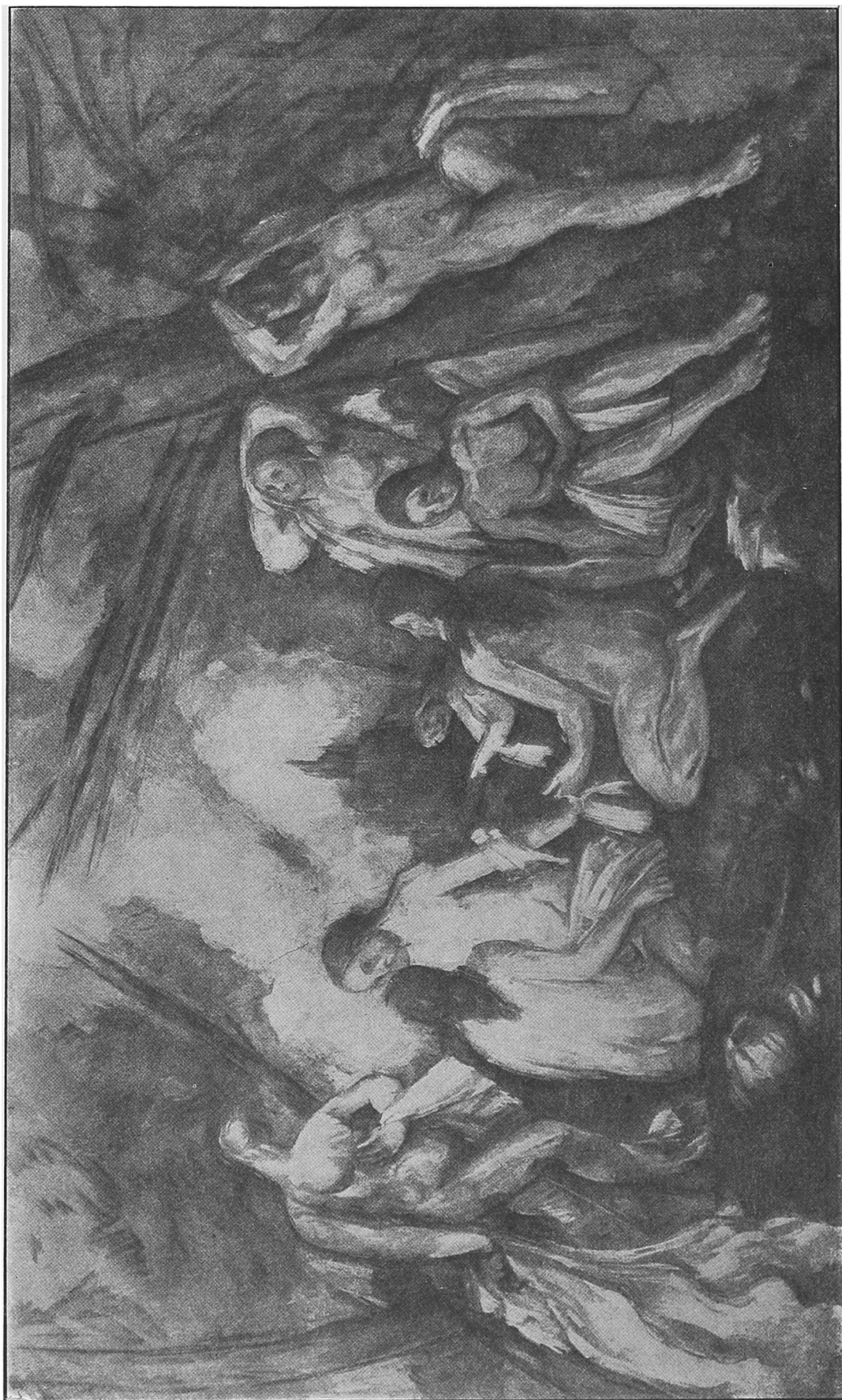
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"THE BATHERS,"

BY CÉZANNE

A Degenerate Work of Art

(See page 326)

sorrowing mother must be beautiful. These selections are all a matter of the conceiving of the subject of the story, on a lofty plane of thought. But how beautifully it has been told!

Having *conceived* his subject on a lofty plane he *composes* it perfectly. In fact it is monumental. Let the student draw a line from the farmer's head to the head of the doctor and then to his hand, then to the left-hand corner of the picture and he will have one side of a triangle; then draw another line from the farmer's head to the handle of the pitcher and to the right-hand corner, and he will have a second line of a triangle—the floor line making the base of his triangle or pyramid. Again, the doctor's head is the apex of another pyramid. It is this double-pyramidization which gives the work that monumental character. In fact there are five pyramidal masses. It is these that heave or lift the mind upward. Yet this pyramidization is so skilfully concealed that only the experts in composition note it.

Then through all these *pyramidal* lines which *lift* the mind we have smaller *curved* and graceful lines—the following of which *cradle* the eyes and mind back and forth in a pleasurable manner; and then the bench and the square window give just enough *angular* lines to *jostle* the eyes and mind. So that here Fildes has used all three elements of beauty of line-composition—angular, curved and pyramidal.

The rabid modernist will say: "Yes, these are all conventional accessories." Of course they are. But there is a decree of nature, that only by the use of these three elements of line-beauty can an artist make a really beautiful composition—albeit he must do it with infinite skill as Fildes has here done so as not to make it too obvious.

Having composed his work monumentally, how consummately he has *expressed* in each face and in each body that which the drama admitted of being expressed! How intently and sympathetically the doctor seeks a clew to save the life of that child, even though it is only the child of a poor farmer. How astonishingly he has rendered the sickness of the child even though she be asleep! In fact the drawing and rendering of the child is one of the great masterpieces of skill of the 19th Century—

equalled only by that other masterpiece in the Luxembourg—the sick child in Geoffroy's "A Visit" (See January ART WORLD 1917, page 268).

Then note the stern self-control of the father as he "stands by" his beloved wife to support her soul in the hour of trial. He is majestic in his simple devotion to the stricken wife. And last but not least, study the profound dejection and surrender to her heartache of the poor mother! Nobody ever did express soul suffering more completely than has Fildes on this small piece of canvas. All this intense drama is reinforced by the profound expression with which the light from the lamp and from the window and every scrap and object is painted. Finally notice the expression of all the hands!

In short it is a triumph of the power of adequate expression in face and of form, line and movement. All this has been achieved by a drawing so perfect, a color so appropriate—but it must be seen in the Tate Gallery to be appreciated—a technique so effective yet so modestly personal as to be universal in its appeal, without missing the "personal" note. No "individualistic" ego-maniacal technical stunts here of drawing or painting! All is simple, powerful, lifting and poetic in the highest degree.

Then, what a social sermon—in what was never intended to be a sermon! We have the whole range of human love—affectionate love of mother for her child, loyalty of the husband to the wife and the great-hearted sympathy of a powerful man for a helpless child; all at the close of day, with perilous night stealing on, more dreaded by the wise mother than the morning; and that no doubt makes her ask herself: "Will she survive the witching hour when life's energy runs low?" So that we are justified in saying, this is one of the greatest works of art created during the Nineteenth Century and as immortal as the canvas upon which it is painted.

It is such works as this that English artists produce now and then—which, in the mass of mediocre English art, are apt to be passed over by mediocre critics dulled by the general commonplaceness of output; but this is true of the mass of output in every nation, even France, but there it has always one redeeming quality: cleverness—even when spiritually common.

A DEGENERATE WORK OF ART

"THE BATHERS" BY CÉZANNE

HAVING read our praise of Luke Fildes's work would the reader expect to find a writer capable of saying—it is not art at all? But, as Napoleon said "The unexpected always happens."

A supra-pretentious æsthetician named Clive Bell says in his "Art," the most ambitious book yet written to bolster up the waning movement called Modernism, above all that branch of it called Post-Impressionism: "Of course 'The Doctor' is not a work of art. In its form is not used as an *object* of emotion but as a means of suggesting emotions. . . . Not being a work of art 'The Doctor' has none of the immense *ethical* value possessed by all objects that provoke æsthetic pleasure." [Italics are ours.] Such a verdict is simply stupefying to a normal man.

For the guidance of those readers who are not expert from long experience in catching the "joker"

in any book, above all in art books issued by financially interested European art dealers, and by publishers and writers in the world of art who are often associated with them in the delightful game of fouling waters by methods of the cuttle-fish in order to unload their wares on the public—we will say the joker in this book is found in the first chapter "The Æsthetic Hypothesis," written in the most cryptic pseudo-erudite style with intent no doubt to becloud the reader. Why an "hypothesis" at all in so simple a thing as art? Why not a clear definition, seeing that everything of which we have a really *clear notion* can be defined? But throughout this book there is not one clear sentence as to the fundamentals. No definitions, no explanations, the reader is left in the air as to his real meaning about every basic thing.

On page 6, with exquisite effrontery, Mr. Bell

says: "The starting point for all systems of æsthetics must be the *personal* experience of a *peculiar* emotion. . . . This emotion is called *aesthetic emotion*; and if we can discover *some quality* common and *peculiar* to all objects that provoke it, we shall have solved what I take to be the central problem of æsthetics." This is the first joker in Mr. Bell's book.

On page 7 he says: "For either all works of visual art have some *common* quality, or when we speak of 'works of art' we gibber. . . . There must be *some quality* without which a work of art cannot exist; possessing which, in the least degree, no work is altogether worthless. What is this quality? What quality is shared by all objects that provoke æsthetic emotion? What quality is common to Santa Sophia and the windows at Chartres, Mexican sculpture, a Persian bowl, Chinese carpets, Giotto's frescoes at Padua and the masterpieces of Poussin, Piero della Francesca and Cézanne? Only one answer seems possible—*significant form*; 'significant form' is the one quality common to all works of visual art." [Italics are ours.] This is the second and most dangerous joker in the book.

If you swallow these baits, reader, you are lost! But luckily for art, not only does Mr. Bell nowhere explain what he means by "significant form" but the whole statement is absolutely false and a Mephistophic trap cunningly fabricated and enunciated to catch the unwary.

Who did ever agree to these two grotesque assumptions? Certainly no writers of any authority. They are Mr. Bell's own *ipse-dixits*, issued with all the imperturbable cheek characteristic of the Cagliostro of the ages in the expectation that the world is foolish enough to swallow this bait as the fat carps at Fontainebleau swallow anything that is thrown to them. Cunningly enough he nowhere in his book clearly explains what he means by "significant form," and this in itself is sufficiently significant—either of an intention to becloud the issue or of the fact that Mr. Bell does not size up to his first paragraph: "He who would elaborate a plausible theory of æsthetics must possess two qualities—artistic sensibility and a turn for clear thinking."

As we painfully wade through this book we finally grasp that perhaps by "significant form" Mr. Bell really means "style," but that word does not once occur in his book. If he does not mean that, he means mere moonshine. But assuming that he does mean style: style is not the *common quality* of all art nor is "significant form," whatever that might be. There are many works of art that have no style whatever. Others have much style. Some have a universal style, others a purely personal style. But in any event to make style the basis of a definition of art is silly or a charlatan's attempt to throw things topsy-turvy in the ancient art world of common-sense.

If some one should to-day preach: "Copper and not gold is the basis of a dollar!" because copper enters into the making of a gold dollar, the Government would call in an alienist.

To preach that style or "significant form" is the one common quality of works of art, and that such works of art as have not this peculiar style are rubbish; and to make style, or significant form,

the basis of a system of æsthetics, also calls for an alienist—or if not that, then the ostracism we give to all charlatans.

In all things majorities rule. And the vast majority of thinkers, from Plato down, have long ago agreed that the basis of all art is *the expression and the stirring of human emotion*. Delsarte put the matter in a nutshell when he said "Art is an emotion passed through thought and fixed in form." And it makes no difference what the emotion is or what the form is. A child trying to express an emotion, no matter how crude, creates a work of art. It may be a childish work of art, but it is a work of art nevertheless and the only difference between a childish work of art and the greatest work of art is that, in the greatest work of art the greater emotion is expressed in the greatest manner.

This is so axiomatic that the attempt of Mr. Bell and his fellows to allure the world cunningly to shift the basis of art and accept his impudent dictum that "significant form" or style is the basis of art, would be exasperating, were it not so screamingly foolish and funny. The reader who reaches the bottom of page 8 in Mr. Bell's volume may as well throw the book in the ash-barrel, for he will only wade through a mass of more or less mushy, insolent and anarchistic twaddle, and at the end have met with not one constructive idea.

But to expose one more of the "æstheticians" who is either a lunatic or a fraud we will analyze his book in which, for support of himself, he now and then drags in Mr. Roger Fry—another pretentious art prophet and twisted soul lost in a jungle of auto-deceptions, easily up-gobbled half-truths and exploded notions floating round in the Modernistic Bohemia like the algæ and rotting wrecks in that fabulous aquatic maze the Sargasso Sea.

According to Mr. Bell works of art are such as have "Significant Form." Those which have not *his* "significant form" are not works of art, according to him. Why? Because "They leave untouched our *aesthetic emotions*—because it is not their forms, but the ideas or information suggested or conveyed by these forms, that affect us." And according to him works of art should not "suggest ideas or information." Yet the suggestion and *representation* of ideas has been the main object of every *expressive* artist since time began!

Moreover, according to Mr. Bell, *representation*—that is, the naturalistic and rational representation of an idea, in naturalistic forms—is taboo in "Art." Ignoring Shakespeare's famous advice to the players in "Hamlet" he has the ineptitude to say: "The thing that Shakespeare set himself to realize was not a faithful presentation of life. The creation of illusion was not the artistic problem that Shakespeare used as a channel for his artistic emotions." This, in view of the fact that Shakespeare emphatically instructed the players: "To hold, as 't were, the *mirror up to nature!*"

Further Mr. Bell says: "*Representation* is not of necessity baneful. . . . Very often, however, representation is a sign of weakness in an artist." . . . Every sacrifice made to representation is something stolen from art."

But we might ask: what is the fundamental basis

of the visual drama? Representation, is it not? Representation of life in all its phases? Take representation out of art, and dramatic art from Aischylos down would have to be wiped out as not art at all, but "nasty realism"—as Mr. Bell says good representative art is.

We repeat, according to Mr. Bell, art consists of "significant form," "creative form," "pure form"—"imagined form"—that is: all such form as is not realistic, representative or naturalistic, but *imagined form*, that is: such form as all the *primitive* or *savage* artists created or bungled into because they could not do better with the material they had to work with. Such was—according to him—the art of the Sumerians, Chaldeans, archaic Greeks, the primitive Byzantines and primitive Italians down to Cimebuë, and then the brutalized and simplified forms of a Matisse, a Cézanne, a Gauguin and the whole crew of Post-Impressionists—far removed from even relatively true natural forms!

Says Mr. Bell: "Very often, I fear the misrepresentation of the *primitives* must be attributed to what critics call 'wilful distortion.' Be that as it may, the point is that, either from want of skill or want of will, primitives neither create illusions, nor make display of extravagant accomplishment, but concentrate their energies on the one thing essential—the creation of form (we should say the bungling of form). Thus they have created the finest works of art that we possess." (*Sic.*)

Again: "Go to Ravenna and you will see the masterpieces of Christian art, the primitives: go to the Tate Gallery or the Luxembourg, and you will see Christian art at its last gasp." And further: "Though I cannot rate the best Byzantine art of the Ninth, Tenth, Eleventh, Twelfth Centuries quite so high as I rate that of the Sixth, I am inclined to hold it superior, not only to anything that was to come, but also to the very finest achievements of the greatest ages of Egypt, Crete and Greece!" And then he goes into raptures over the "significant form" of the malformed and deformed works of Cézanne of which we give a good example on page 323.

But the most neurotic doctrine of this æsthete's "Æsthetic Hypothesis" and "Metaphysical Hypothesis" is that art should be *utterly detached* from life, and not represent life, nor arouse the emotions of life, but stir only what he, with a new-fangled notion, presumes to call *aesthetic emotion*, whatever that may mean. Hear him: "Art transports us from the world of *man's activity* to a world of æsthetic exaltation." . . . "What I have to say is this: the rapt philosopher, and he who contemplates a work of art, inhabits a world with an intense and peculiar significance of its own; that significance is *unrelated* to the significance of *life*. In this world the emotions of *life* find no place. It is a world with emotions of its own." . . . "What, then, is the conclusion of the whole matter? No more than this, I think. The contemplation of pure form leads to a state of extraordinary exaltation and *complete detachment from the concerns of life*: of so much, speaking for myself, I am sure." . . . "And of one thing I am sure. Be they artists or lovers of art, mystics or mathematicians, those who achieve ecstasy are those *who have freed themselves from the arrogance of humanity*." . . .

"Because the æsthetic emotions are outside and above life, it is possible to take refuge in them from life. He who has once lost himself in an 'O Altitude!' will not be tempted to overestimate the fussy excitements of action." . . . "That is why poetry, though it has its raptures, does not transport us to the remote æsthetic beatitude in which, *freed from humanity*, we are upstayed by a musical and pure visual form." [*Italics are ours.*] But nowhere does he explain what is "pure visual form."

That is: this Hegelio-metaphysical, æsthetic Münchhausen has lifted himself by the boot-straps of his "transcendental ratiocination" to a point of detachment so far above his fellow men and from life such as all normal men see it, that he has, like a Mandarin of art in his "Ivory Tower," reduced all art to his petty piffle of a conception—"significant form"!

And the nearest he comes to telling us his idea of "significant form" is by the following footnote: "When Mr. Okakura, the official editor of *The Temple Treasures of Japan*, first came to Europe . . . it was not until he came on to Henri Matisse that he again found himself in the *familiar world of pure art*!" And further: "Primarily it is as a period of fertility in good artists that I admire the Post-Impressionist movement." And further: "Cézanne carried me off my feet before ever I noticed that his strongest characteristic was an insistence on the supremacy of significant form." On page 329 we give two examples of the art of Matisse and on page 323 one of Cézanne. They speak for themselves.

That we are not doing the latter injustice by selecting this work of his we will state that in the sumptuous volume "Paul Cézanne" by Vollard, art dealer of Paris, page 122, will be found a photograph of Cézanne seated before this very picture. Also we do not give it a skimpy quarter of a page but a full-page illustration, so that the reader can study this work, one of those which took Mr. Bell "off his feet."

Here we have, then, what he calls "significant form"! For us it is significant with a vengeance of Cézanne's lunacy. For did any sane artist ever attempt to pass off such deformed forms as *artistic* or *beautiful*, or at all *human forms*?

But Mr. Bell says: "We are familiar with pictures that interest us and excite our admiration, but do not move us as works of art. To this class belongs what I call *Descriptive Painting*—that is, painting in which forms are used not as *objects* of emotion but as *means* of suggesting emotion or conveying information. Portraits of psychological and historical value, topographical works (does he mean landscapes?), pictures which tell stories and suggest situations, illustrations of all sorts belong to this class. . . . According to my hypothesis, they are not works of art. They leave untouched our *aesthetic* emotions because it is not their *forms* but the *ideas* or information suggested or conveyed by their forms that affect us." [*Italics are ours.*]

This is either the metaphysical hypothesis of a madman or the endeavor of a cynical, commercial charlatan to "put over" on mankind a new "hypothesis" as he calls it—that of "æsthetic emotion," and

opposing it to spiritual emotion and to set himself up as the prophet of an entirely new *basis* of art. But nowhere does he tell us what constitutes "æsthetic emotion"—the *basis* of his new hypothesis and cornerstone of his system of art valuation.

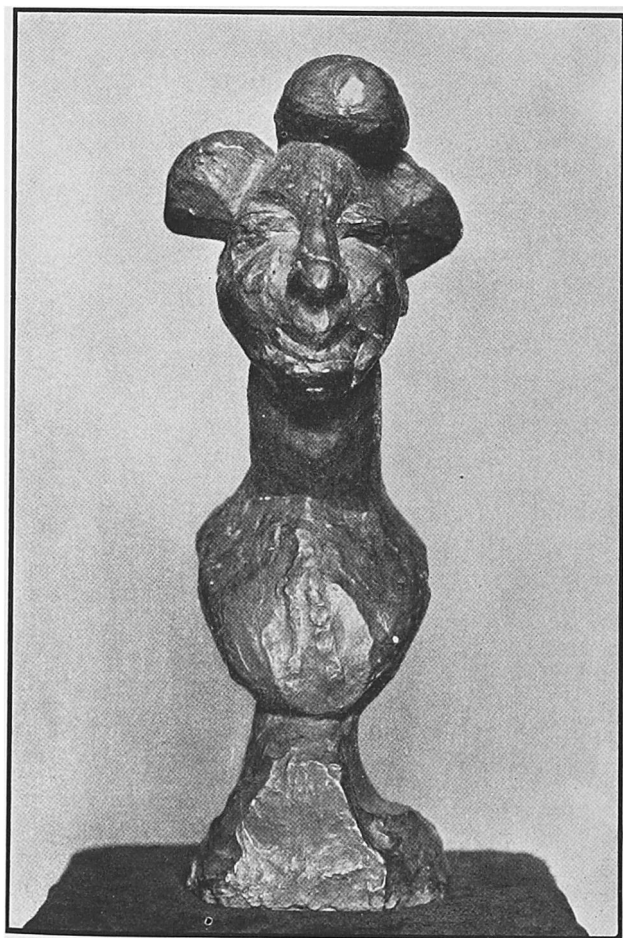
He goes on to say: "Few pictures are better known or liked than Frith's 'Paddington Station': certainly I should be the last to grudge it its popularity. Many weary forty minutes have I whiled away disentangling its fascinating incidents and forging for each an imaginary past and an improbable future. But certain though it is that Frith's masterpiece, or engravings of it, have provided thousands with half-hours of curious and fanciful pleasure, it is not less certain that no one has experienced before it one half-second of *æsthetic* rapture—and this although the picture contains several pretty passages of color, and is by no means badly painted. 'Paddington Station' is not a work of art; it is an interesting and amusing document in which line and color are used to recount anecdotes, suggest ideas and indicate the manners and customs of an age: they are not used to provoke æsthetic emotion."

"About the middle of the Nineteenth Century art was nearly dead as art can be. The Pre-Raphael-



A PAINTED PORTRAIT
BY MATISSE

Example of "creative form," "imagined form" according to the Post-Impressionists. In normal people it creates astonishment and disgust and an unaffected hilarity. Yet Mr. Bell considers such things "pure form," such works a fit basis for an "Æsthetic Hypothesis" and the only kind of works worthy of the name of Art.



A PORTRAIT IN BRONZE
BY MATISSE

Sample of "significant form" which, for Mr. Clive Bell and the Post-Impressionists, is the basis of art. Significant of the incapacity of a child or savage, or of a charlatan hoping to unload such works upon cunningly deluded people or semi-insane neurotics.

ites had the taste to prefer Giotto to Raphael, but the only genuine reason they could give for their preference was that they felt Raphael to be vulgar. The reason was good but not fundamental."

"The Seventeenth Century is rich in individual geniuses; but they are individual. Rembrandt, indeed, perhaps the greatest of them all, is a typical ruin of his age. For, except in a few of his later works, his sense of form and design is utterly lost in a mass of rhetoric, romance and chiaroscuro. . . . It is difficult to forgive the Seventeenth Century for what it made of Rembrandt's genius." Why this cry? Because Rembrandt was rational and drew and painted close to nature.

Such insolent assumption of superiority might be tolerated if Mr. Bell would say that some other rational, naturalistic artist pleased him more than Rembrandt, such as Titian or Velasquez. But to trot out the undeveloped, still childish Primitives, who worked during the intellectual night of the Middle Ages from the Fifth to the Fourteenth Centuries and say that those artists and the savages of Africa alone produced art is so exasperating that it is not possible to treat him with respect.

This "thinker" reminds one of the Parisian distiller who, every now and then, would bring out a new concoction and say: "This alone can give you real joy! What you have been experiencing from other liquors since Adam is not joy but a sham joy—only as yet you do not know it. Only I and a few adepts can now really taste the joy of this new drink—later, when you have tired of your ancient source of joy, this new source will appeal to

you as giving you the only real joy!" For Mr. Bell says: "It is a pity that cultivated and intelligent men and women cannot be induced to believe that a great gift of æsthetic appreciation is at least as rare in visual as in musical art (but the latter is not rare) I do not say that they cannot understand art—rather I say that they cannot understand the state of mind of those who understand it best." And so this new æsthetic pundit lets us gradually know that all the art which all the normal thinkers of the world have for thousands of years regarded as great is to him simply rubbish, and only such art is art, to him, as is archaic or degenerate or abstract and metaphysical and detached from all the concerns of life and utterly unrepresentative of human emotions!

Such a book as this by Clive Bell is a pernicious poison. For the inexperienced and those who do not quickly see the "joker" in any argument or system of thinking, brought forward to defend bad or degrading art in order to catch the shekels of the crowd, are caught by its specious and pretentious "learning."

Art which detaches itself from life, has no concern with life or the emotions, hopes and fears and aspirations of men, has no warrant for existence. For the most perfect art is that which not only deals with life but does it the most profoundly and expresses and represents it the most completely. And all art like the example by Cézanne we here reproduce, in which the forms are either underrealized through awkward incompetence, or overrealized through sophisticated deformation, are the works either of undeveloped children or incompetent maniacs or of cynical charlatans deliberately bent on buncoing the public by turning rational form, full of spiritual emotions for us normal people, into "significant or imagined form" full of "æsthetic emotions" which no one comprehends except the artistic crooks who fabricate it to swindle the cunningly bewildered portion of the world.

This picture by Cézanne which we reproduce, appears to all normal artists—those who have not been made neurotics by hashish, absinthe or vice—to be a mere sketch. As such, nothing can be said against it. For "a sketch ends where criticism begins!" Moreover it is a fine example of what the cynical modernists call a "conventional beaux-art composition"—well-balanced and architectonic. But for these Modernists it is not "conventional"—only because Cézanne made it! Had Boulanger or Gérôme, two rational and great artists, made it, it would be for Mr. Bell, the Modernist, a despicable "academic convention." Placed in the hands of a master like Ingres or Holbein or Velasquez, not to speak of Rembrandt, Giorgione and Raphael, it might be made into something really fine. But since, for the Modernists, nothing counts in art except a shrieking, ego-maniacal "individuality," an unheard-of stunning novelty of technique, "significant or imagined" form, Cézanne went just so far in the *twisting* of his forms, of his heads, tree-trunks and branches, etc., went just so far in his deformation of the form, and then said: "*Voilà! un chef-d'oeuvre!*" and at once the candidates for a sanitarium fell down and worshiped!

The fact is Cézanne did not know how to draw. In Vollard's book on Cézanne there are scores of

drawings—but not one of them is above the skill of one who "never took no lessons!" Therefore since this work is deliberately left badly drawn, in a state suggesting either primitive archaicism or the end-of-an-epoch degeneracy, it is "creative form" and therefore "æsthetically emotioning" Art! —to Mr. Bell, whatever that may mean. To talk of creative *composition* is common-sense, but to talk of creative *form* is nonsense, it is only another word for the "deformation of the form." It is this *deformation* of natural human forms when making a statue or a picture which is the essence and degenerating element of extreme Modernistic art.

Was not Zola, the Frenchman and intimate friend of Paul Cézanne, a better judge of his works than Mr. Clive Bell the Englishman? We think so. And Zola said of Cézanne:

"Our comrades willingly held him for a *Raté* (a failure) but I did not cease to tell them: 'Paul has the genius of a great painter!' Ah! Why was I not a good prophet at that time? My dear big Cézanne had the spark. But if he had the *genius* of a great painter, he did not have the *talent* to become one. He lost himself too much in his dreams, dreams which did not have their *accomplishment*. According to his own words he had given himself out to be *nursed by Illusions!* It gives me too much pain when I think of what he *might have been* if he had been willing to *control* his *imagination* and also to *carefully work over his forms* because, if one is born a poet, one has to *learn to be a good workman*."

"Everything that Cézanne wrote was *unexpected* and original, but I did not keep his letters, because I did not for anything in the world want that they might be read by others—because of their *more or less loose form*."

"I remember, however, after receiving one of his missives from Provence having said to him: 'I like these *strange* thoughts of yours like young Bohemians with their bizarre glances, their dirty feet and their heads in flowers.' But I could not help adding: 'Our sovereign master the Public is more difficult to satisfy. It does not care a snap for princesses dressed in rags. To find grace in its eyes we must not only say something, *but we must say it well.*'" [*Italics are ours.*]

But Mr. Roger Fry says in the *Burlington Magazine* of August 1917: "The thought of a Cézanne having to earn his living is altogether too tragic. But if life spared him in this respect his temperament spared him nothing—for this rough Provençal, country-man had so exasperated a sensibility that the smallest detail of daily life, the barking of a dog, the noise of a lift in a neighboring house, the dread of being touched even by his own son, might produce at any moment a nervous explosion. At such times his first relief was in cursing and swearing, but if this failed, the chances were that his anger vented itself on his pictures—he would cut one to pieces with his palette knife or failing that roll it up and throw it into the stove."

Does not all this tend to prove that Cézanne was crazy? And that Zola sensed this and gradually dropped Cézanne? For this Mr. Roger Fry chides Zola, saying of him: "His own practice of literature led him further and further away from any concern with pure art and he failed to recognize

that his own early prophecy of Cézanne's greatness had come true, simply because he himself had become a popular author and Cézanne had failed of any kind of success. Unfortunately Zola, who had evidently lost all real æsthetic feeling, continued to talk about art, and worse than that, he had made the hero of 'L'Oeuvre' a more or less recognizable portrait of his old friend," etc.

We repeat, according to this latest pretentious "æsthetician," there is no art unless it is made of



From "Art" by Clive Bell

"LANDSCAPE" BY CÉZANNE.

Example of "significant form" according to Post-Impressionists; to a normal mind significant of childish incompetence.

"significant form," that is "pure form," that is "creative form," that is "imagined form," that is "stylized form," that is—Style! This brings us back to the vicious half-truth of Chateaubriand: "A book lives only by virtue of its style!"—a slogan the foolishness of which we have already shown. Mr. Bell does not mention the word *style* once in his book—a most significant proof that by "Significant Form" he really means "style" in form, that is: a departure from photographically exact nature, by either taking away from or adding to nature's forms. But this is not new. Bacon had already said: "Art is man *added to nature*." By which he meant—style is—man added to nature, with which we agree.

But the question is always, how far shall an artist depart from nature, in his overstylization of form, before we are justified in calling him insane?

"Significant form" is not art, style is not art; they are a part of art. Simple art means the expression of one's emotions; higher art the expression of an emotion so as to communicate that emotion to others; great art means to express great emotions so grandly that by this expression the same emotions will be roused in the greatest number of people across the ages. How to do this is difficult but not mysterious. We have been explaining the process in the last two years and will keep on doing so.

We repeat, the primitive, with an intellect not yet fully developed, incompetently overstylizing his form through childish awkwardness is only half-awake intellectually, only half-insane. And the extreme neurotic Modernist, oversophisticated and overstylizing his forms—because of overdevelopment of the mind and twisting of his soul—is not longer sane. But when he becomes

overexcited through hashish, absinthe or other vices, plus ego-mania to show off his personal grace of style, so that no living soul should mistake him, as he and his "significant and creative form" strut by, then he is in the pathological state which appealed to Mr. Bell and lured him on to say: "Be they artists or lovers of art, mystics or mathematicians, those who achieve ecstasy are those who have freed themselves from the arrogance of humanity"—a detachment that smacks of the sanitarium!

All of which proves, we repeat, that Mr. Bell is either a charlatan or destructively abnormal. For any man is dangerous who so completely detaches himself from his fellow-men, their sorrows and joys, hopes and fears and aspirations as to stand by with pipe in mouth and hands in pocket cleverly ridiculing their efforts to climb out of the social



From "Art" by Clive Bell

A CABALISTIC PICTURE BY PICASSO

According to Mr. Bell an example of esoteric transcendental "significant form" and "creative form" which gives him and his friends "an æsthetic emotion" bordering on the sublime!

bog, saying: "In a sense all art is anarchical; to take art seriously is to be unable to take seriously the conventions and principles by which societies exist. It may be said with some justice that Post-Impressionism is peculiarly anarchical because it challenges so violently the conventional traditions of art and, by implication I suppose, the conventional view of life."

"Why should artists bother about the fate of humanity? If art does not justify itself, æsthetic rapture does. . . . Rapture suffices."

"To bother much about anything but the present is, we all (Post-Impressionists) agree, beneath the dignity of a healthy human animal."

"The one good thing society can do for the artist is to leave him alone. Give him liberty. The more the artist is freed from the pressure of public taste

and opinion, from the hope of rewards and the menace of morals, from the fear of absolute starvation or punishment and from the prospect of wealth or popular consideration, the better for him and the better for art, and therefore the better for everyone."

Finally we come to the crux of the matter as far as Mr. Bell and his Post-Impressionists *seem* to be concerned: "It is unthinkable that any *Government* should ever *buy* what is *best* in the work of its own age; it is a question how far *purchase by the state*, even of fine old pictures, is a benefit to art." "As for contemporary art, *official patronage* is the surest method of encouraging in it all that is most stupid and pernicious." "As I shall hope to show, something might be said for supporting and enriching Galleries and Museums *if only the public attitude towards, and the official conception of, these places could be changed.*" [Italics are ours.]

That is: Rational art, made in the interest of and inspired by normal society, is pernicious; but Post-Impressionism, inspired by abnormal Modernistic artists is holy! Therefore take your normal art out of the public galleries and put our abnormal art in its place! That is as the French say: *Ote-toi de là que je m'y mette!*

This is the attitude of the whole gang of futuristic anarchists, who have threatened to burn and dynamite every Museum in Europe, in order to have "a new deal" and to begin all over again, simply to please these hectic, restless, impatient men with an insane desire for setting topsy-turvy the world of art: in order to quickly have something they call "New!"

Those who are *au courant* with the secret masonic significance of modernistic works know perfectly well, that those who are the initiated in the cult understand the meaning of certain symbols which are used in them. If the true facts of this meaning were known to those who are led astray by the sophisticated, metaphysical, altitudinizing verbiage of the æsthetic pundits of this whole Futuristic movement, they would pause, and perhaps retrace their steps toward normal ways of thinking and feeling. The police of Europe, familiar with the purlies and cloaca of their cities and with the portentous ravages there of sex-perversion, understand these symbols and suppressed much of this modernistic art—when it went too far. And after this war, much more will certainly be suppressed by an awakened public opinion.

In this book, so full of misstatements as to make the judicious wonder at the moral obliquity of Mr. Bell, he uses much energy in insulting the public by claiming that it knows nothing about art. He caps his system with these edifying sentiments: "Art Schools do nothing but harm, because they must do something." . . . "However wicked it may be to try to shock the public, it is not so wicked as trying to please it." . . . "The least the state can do is to protect the people who have something to say that may cause a riot."

This is the language of every anarchist. For the public knows all that the greatest artist knows about the function of art, i. e.: whether a work of art has the power of emotioning either the body, mind or soul of normal human beings. And that is all the

public needs to know. It does not need to know anything about the mysteries of technical causes. It knows nothing about the technical processes the Creator uses in producing flowers. It needs only to know that flowers do stir our emotions and it does know perfectly well that, in the last analysis, to the vast majority of people on the globe, the Rose comes nearest to being the most beautiful of all flowers and is generally the first choice of all men, even though they may be charmed by many others.

The laws of beauty were fixed by nature. They are known and were analyzed in our November 1916 issue. The public need not know these laws. But it is affected by the various kinds of beauty according to these simple laws; and that is all that is necessary. And these laws will dominate art for all time to come as they have in the past.

Tolstoi was a great story-teller and an erratic philosopher. But he said a few profoundly true things. One is in substance: whenever a charlatan or a semi-madman invents a "new art" he or his protagonists invent a new "system of æsthetics" with new definitions and new hypothesis to justify this new art. The 300-page screed of Mr. Bell is a striking proof of this implication of Tolstoi.

In conclusion, we may say of Mr. Bell what Carlyle said of Coleridge: "His life had been an abstract thinking and dreaming, idealistic, passed amid the ghosts of defunct bodies and of unborn ones. The moaning sing-song of that theosophico-metaphysical monotony left on you, at last, a very dreary feeling . . . but in general you could not call this aimless, cloud-capped, cloud-based, lawlessly meandering human discourse of reason by the name of 'excellent talk,' but only of 'surprising'; and were reminded bitterly of Hazlitt's account of it: 'Excellent talker, very—if you let him start from no premises and come to no conclusion.'

"The truth is, I now see, Coleridge's talk and speculation was the emblem of himself: in it as in him a ray of heavenly inspiration struggled, in a tragically ineffectual degree, with the weakness of flesh and blood . . . he preferred to create logical Fata Morganas for himself on this hither side, and laboriously solace himself with these . . . and he had not valiantly grappled with it, he had fled from it; sought refuge in vague day-dreams, hollow compromises, in opium, in theosophic metaphysics And so the empyrean element, lying smothered under the terrene, and yet inextinguishable there, made sad writhings.

"For the old Eternal Powers do live forever; nor do their laws know any change, however we in our poor wigs and church-tippets may attempt to read their laws. To *steal* into Heaven,—by the modern method, of sticking ostrich-like your head into fallacies on Earth, equally as by the ancient and by all conceivable methods—is forever forbidden. High-treason is the name of that attempt; and it continues to be punished as such. Strange enough: here once more was a kind of Heaven-scaling Ixion; and to him, as to the old one, the just gods were very stern! The ever-revolving, never-advancing Wheel (of a kind) was his, through life; and from his Cloud-Juno did not he too procreate strange Centaurs, spectral Puseyisms, monstrous illusory Hybrids, and ecclesiastical Chimeras,—which now roam the earth in a very lamentable manner?"